

PIP item 3B.1 Work with the courts to establish common vision for child welfare**3B.1.2: Establish a regularly occurring meeting with AOC to collaborate on common child welfare issues and evaluate opportunities for improvement including model courts.**

This item is supplemental to items submitted during PIP quarters 1 and 5.

DCBS is constantly working collaboratively with the Kentucky court system to improve the quality of services to the families we serve. This collaboration happens on all levels from local county offices and courts to the CO of both organizations. In most situations the local supervisor attempts to resolve any issues locally, and if they are unable to do so, they request the assistance of their regional office. The regional office attempts to address the issue, and if they are unable to resolve it, it is then referred to CO.

A major challenge that both organizations are currently facing involves working efficiently and effectively with families who have substance abuse issues. For the past few years, each organization has been struggling to serve these families while keeping the children safe. At times each group has found that rather than working together, they actually were at odds with each other. The following is an example: the goal of DCBS is to keep families connected in cases where the child(ren) had to be temporarily removed from the home. DCBS immediately schedules visits and phone calls between the children, parents and extended family. DCBS understands how important it is for both the child and the parent to have this contact, it is critical to the goal of reunification. The court, in an attempt to get the parent to comply with DCBS, would order that the parent not have any visitation or contact with the children until they had 4 consecutive clean drugs screens. It became apparent to DCBS that the court judges did not understand the significance of the bond between the parent and child, nor did they understand addiction and recovery. It became evident the courts and DCBS needed to have a basic understanding not only of each organization but also information on how to work with these families.

DCBS Central office and AOC joined together and requested TA regarding working with substance abusing families. As a result of the TA, a joint training was developed for the courts and DCBS. This training was provided in each region for court staff, judges, substance abuse treatment providers and regional DCBS staff.

This collaboration began as a result of the local offices requesting assistance. Central Office management recognized through the many request for assistance that the problem was somewhat universal.

Parts (2-10) are examples of how each individual region attempts to resolve issues with the court as they arise.

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Issue	Plan of Action	Implementation/ Completion Date	Outcome
Resolving issues with court on the local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue court support team staff assigned to DNA, Status and DVO court to trouble shoot issues daily. Continue bi-weekly meetings with court personnel, Chief Judge, 1&1 SRAA and OOHG Specialist. Continue quarterly Dependency sub-committee meetings chaired by Judge Garber with DCBS management and court personnel, GALs, PA and CA. Continue consulting with OLS –regional attorneys regarding questionable court orders, requesting CHFS attorney presence in court when appropriate. 	Ongoing	
How does regional management involve Central Office in Court issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to send issues to OFC through regional attorneys. Continue to send issues to Central Office through CQI Process and through SRA. 	Ongoing	
How are issues /resolutions communicated to the courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to document dependency sub-committee meetings through minutes. Local management will continue to document resolutions, protocols, through memos to staff with cc to chief judge and AOC coordinator. Training for staff on writing petitions to 	Ongoing	

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	be scheduled early 2012.		
How does SRA interact with courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRA to continue to attend quarterly dependency sub-committee meetings. • SRA to be available to Judges by phone and email to resolve issues. 	Ongoing	
What work wells in region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing communication and collaboration by SRAs and courts i.e. truancy court, diversion project. • Continue operation of Model Court in Jefferson County. • Continued TA and support from NCJFCJ. 	Ongoing	
Areas in need of improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court ordered psychological and drug screening where CHFS is required to pay for the service. • Ongoing emphasis on respectful, professional behavior by all involved parties. 	January 2012- Agenda topics for Dependency sub-committee.	

Eastern Mountain Service Region Court Collaboration

1. How do you currently resolve issues with the court on the local level?

Each of the 13 counties resolves issues differently as required by their court system.

Local offices within the Eastern Mountain Service Region have the ability to resolve issues with the court on a local level by scheduling meetings with the Judge's Secretary or Court Social Worker. Several offices within the region have staff appointed to serve as court liaison. The court liaison or FSOS coordinate meetings with the Judge's staff to address issues and barriers.

Staff within the EMSR also utilize the County Attorney to address concerns with the Judge as needed.

2. How does the local office involve the Regional management in court issues?

The local office involves Regional Management in court issues if there is no resolution after meeting with the Judge. These issues are discussed and addressed as a team to develop a resolution. These meetings take place to discuss the trends and solutions to issues including applications of policy to the relevant issue. Meetings are held with frontline staff to retrain or reiterate CHFS policy related to the issues in court. The FSOS will consult with a Social Service Specialist. The SSS and FSOS will develop an action plan in an attempt to resolve the issues. The plan is shared with the Regional OLS and SRAA to advise management of the ongoing issues. Follow up is provided with OLS and the SRAA. If the plan is not successful than OLS and the SRAA will consult with Susan Howard, SRA, to develop a strategy.

3. How does Regional management involve Central Office in court issues?

Regional Management involves Central Office in court issues as soon as there is feedback that regional level efforts have not been effective. Regional Management maintains clear and open communication with the court and local level staff to obtain feedback. If issues cannot be resolved locally Regional Management will contact Central Office for policy clarification. The SRA will also contact OLS and Central Office Leadership to seek assistance. Regional Management takes a proactive approach with all issues and initiates contact with Central Office as early in the process as possible. Regional Management has worked with OLS and Central Office in the past to appeal court orders. Regional office has requested that OLS visit with certain courts to address issues as they arise.

4. How are issues/resolutions communicated to the courts?

Issues and resolutions are primarily communicated to the court through meetings. The FSOS or Court Liaison meets with the court to explore possible solutions. If the meetings are not effective in alleviating the issues than the FSOS and Regional Management staff may provide local trainings. Regional Management has also requested local OLS to complete phone calls, emails, meetings and trainings with the courts.

5. How are issues/resolutions communicated to staff?

Depending on the issues, if it impacts the entire region, then it is addressed at the Regional FSOS meeting. If it impacts only one FSOS then it is addressed individually. If the issue is related to an individual staff person or a team, then retraining as well as coaching and mentoring by FSOS, will be completed. The Judge will address issues with the FSOS or Court Liaison. If the issue involves a specific staff member the FSOS will communicate one on one utilizing coaching and mentoring skills. Issues are also addressed by written PIP plans, reviewing policy, and FSOS attending court hearings to monitor and observe progress. The FSOS will also follow up with staff during case consults.

The Judge and their staff will host meetings with local staff and the FSOS to communicate issues and resolutions.

If issues appear to be a trend within the county the FSOS will provide training or request Regional Management provide a refresher. The FSOS will address and explore issues during staff meetings and in individual case consults. Again, the FSOS may attend court hearings to monitor and observe progress. The FSOS will notify staff of resolutions via email and monthly staff meetings.

6. How does the SRA interact and communicate with courts?

The SRA interacts and communicates with the court proactively by frequent meetings, phone calls and emails. The SRA will notify the court of trends within a county to keep the court informed of current stressors for the local office and staff. The SRA will advise the court of the Region's Plan to address and resolve the barriers. Often, this is done in a way that limits or causes less difficulty for the local office. Especially when it is an initiative or issues the courts disagree with the CHFS policy.

The SRA will meet with individually with the court on issues that have not been resolved by the FSOS or SRAA. She is also available and open to meeting with Judges to address issues. The SRA maintains open communication with the court and participates in local trainings to maintain relationships with the courts.

7. What works well with the courts in your region?

EMSR is always willing to meet with the courts and strives to maintain an open line of communication. EMSR understands that communication is vital. Local staff and regional management understand the importance of showing respect and ensuring a working relationship with the courts. The counties strive to submit court reports timely. FSOS' and Regional Management are always available to meet with the courts as requested. The use of a liaison as a means to communication with the court has helped tremendously in the county. This has limited the interaction from worker directly with the court system helping to reduce the number of ex parte conversations with the court. This ex parte communication was creating a barrier and undermining our mission to protect children and families.

The region is not shy about requesting assistance as needed and understands the importance of following up with recommendations from the courts in a timely fashion. EMSR is also always eager to try to new approaches. Change Teams has been an effective example of addressing the ongoing issue of recidivism and truancy issues with adolescents. Through identifying an issue, developing a team to negotiate a plan, lots of communication and working in collaboration with staff, courts, county attorney, and community partners the county has seen a reduction in recidivism and truancy issues.

8. What areas need to be improved or are currently being worked on to improve?

Each county appears to have a different area of improvement within the region. The list includes:

*Lack of appropriate representation from County Attorney

*CI visitation/custody issues that result in orders for the Cabinet

*Better crosswalk/alignment between KRS and SOP

*Situations in which the Judge will grant permanent custody but refuses to release the Cabinet from efforts with the parents.

* Court ordered CHFS to supervise visits when there is not an active case.

*Subpoena's not being served and the court wanting workers to do them.

*The court wants the workers to complete forms that should be completed by the court clerks.

*Untimely receipt of court dockets therefore hindering the worker's ability to complete court reports timely.

Court Collaboration

Salt River Trail Service Region

December 2011 PIP Item

1. How do you currently resolve issues with the court on the local level?

Each issue is handled case by case. Many times the Social Worker handles issues as they arise in court. Other times the supervisor gets involved, by helping the SW talk to the Judge, County Attorney, CASA or GAL, as needed. Sometimes the SW and supervisor consult with the Regional Attorney if the issue is a legal matter. The most positive relationships between local offices and court personnel are where the local staff maintain open/transparent relationships with the court, based upon mutual trust.

2. How does the local office involve the Regional management in court issues?

Court Issues get bumped up to Associates when the local office cannot resolve them. The Associate may conduct a staffing on a case to help problem solve court issues with the SW and supervisor. There are some complex situations where the Associate may personally contact court personnel to help resolve an issue.

3. How does Regional management involve Central Office in court issues?

Regional Leadership may make Central Office aware of certain court orders we asked a Regional Attorney to appeal.

4. How are issues/resolutions communicated to the courts?

Some issues are communicated to courts when we appeal a court order. Other issues are simply resolved by talking to court personnel.

5. How are issues/resolutions communicated to staff?

Issues and resolutions are communicated to staff in supervisory conferences, local office staff meetings and SRT Leadership Meetings.

6. How does the SRA interact and communicate with courts?

The SRA attends court in each Judicial Circuit and has personally met each judge in the Service Region. The SRA regularly attends court in counties where DCBS has the most challenging relationships with judges or court personnel. All judges and many AOC court personnel know how

to contact the SRA for any issue/concern they may have regarding DCBS. Often times court is upset because they want to take a certain direction in a case that is not congruent with DCBS SOP. The SRA often has to defend the service delivery/case planning of local staff, explaining to court personnel/judges that staff are simply following SOP. There are situations where court wants certain actions taken with a family/child that DCBS SOP does not permit.

7. What works well with the courts in your region?

Transparency; open communication; educating court personnel on DCBS SOP; diligent follow through on court orders; sharing DCBS data and outcomes as needed; attending court meetings; having a collaborative relationship with the local CASA agency.

8. What areas need to be improved or are currently being worked on to improve?

Ensuring that OLS leadership in Central Office remains supportive of Service Regions when local leadership wants to appeal a court order and having access to Regional Attorneys to come to court with staff on complex cases where the County Attorney prosecuting the case does not agree with DCBS plans ; training staff on court testimony and preparation is needed on an ongoing basis rather than intermittently; in 2009 and 2010 DCBS had annual meetings with Judges to keep communication lines open and the sharing of information from both AOC and DCBS. The return of those meetings would be most welcome.

Currently the Service Region is working in Hardin County with AOC, getting Model Court operational.

Many SRT counties still have District Court for dependency/neglect/abuse/status petitions. Family Court is needed in these counties to help ensure best practice for families in those counties. For example, several District Court judges will not grant Permanent Custody to caretaking relatives, delaying permanency for those children. These judges believe only Circuit (Family) Court can issue such orders.

Southern Bluegrass Court Collaboration Plan

1. How do you currently resolve issues with the court on the local level?

The SBG has a variety of ways to resolve court issues on the local level. We use the tiered approach, which starts with the local supervisors who problem solves most issues. In all rural counties, there are established court days and the team supervisors are regularly present in court to resolve most issues. In Fayette, we have a rotating on-call for supervisors as well as a court team with a supervisor who solves most issues.

2. How does the local office involve the Regional management in court issues?

In addition, the Associate and SRA are involved in model court steering committees and sub committees in Fayette, Boyle, Mercer, and Jessamine, as well as key supervisors. Further, Fayette has a quarterly problem solving meeting for DCBS leadership and court personnel including judges. Further in rural counties, the Associates rotate regularly through courts to collaborate and solve issues. Most recently in Madison County, the Associates were a part of a county-wide training in Madison with the County Attorney and all DCBS staff.

3. How does Regional management involve Central Office in court issues?

The SBG using their local attorneys, particularly in situation where ordered are challenged. In those cases, regional attorneys talk with Frankfort attorneys to seek advice. In addition, the SRA is involved in most of those complex case situations with Regional, as well as, Frankfort attorneys and the chain of command.

4. How are issues/resolutions communicated to the courts?

Most communications goes through supervisors, and Associates through above mentioned plans.

5. How are issues/resolutions communicated to staff?

Most communication goes through supervisors and Associates thorough above mentioned plans

6. How does the SRA interact and communicate with courts?

The SRA is involved in multiple court committees through model court. In addition, the SRA has a relationship with many key judges in the SBG who feel free to call to problem solve issues at the local level.

7. What works well with the courts in your region?

Most of the SBG courts have respect for the Cabinet and understand the enormous responsibility of front line social workers.

8. What areas need to be improved or are currently being worked on to improve?

Communication between AOC and DCBS leadership. Top down communication issues, both with AOC and DCBS affect local relationships.

Of note, is that Fayette County carries over 50% of the caseloads in the SBG and the model court sites comprise approximately 75% of the caseloads in the SBG. This continues to be an effective endeavor in fostering communication regarding Cabinet mission/visions as well as continuing collaborative relationships with the court.

Northern Bluegrass Court Collaboration Plan

1. How do you currently resolve issues with the court on the local level?

Communication is open either via phone or email between SRA/SRAA & Judge

2. How does the local office involve the Regional management in court issues?

The FSOS discusses situation with SRAA, who will contact SRA if there are issues.

3. How does Regional management involve Central Office in court issues?

If it is something that can't be resolved on local level – then SRA sends email to DSR

4. How are issues/resolutions communicated to the courts?

Either by phone or email from SRAA or SRA

5. How are issues/resolutions communicated to staff?

Via discussion with SRAA

6. How does the SRA interact and communicate with courts?

Meet bimonthly with one judge – meetings scheduled yearly with Judge and or panel. Some judges prefer to talk directly with FSOS in their county (smaller counties)

7. What works well with the courts in your region?

Open communication & accessibility

8. What areas need to be improved or are currently being worked on to improve?

I have tried to discuss these things with judges with no resolution:

Judges accepting and complying with AOC Family Court rules instead of making their own – not all judges work from the same rules; and
Permanency for kids

LAKES REGION ACTION PLANNING #20—Regional Plan for Court Collaboration

December 2011

GOAL: (theme) Enhance community collaboration				
OBJECTIVE: Enhance collaboration with courts within the Lakes Region				
STRATEGY: Identify current collaboration practices as well as identification of areas currently being addressed as well as identification of opportunities for improvement Barriers identified: Judge's lack of understanding of Cabinet policies and thus court orders that are not consistent with Cabinet policy; CASA concerns; permanency issues				
TASK(S)	Lead Assigned	Evidence of Completion	Date Due	Date Completed
Seek input from all Lakes FSOSs regarding current collaboration efforts with local courts as well as current opportunities for improvement.	Janet Doyel, PIP Lead	FSOSs to email Janet Doyel with responses/input	11/30/11	
Review and discussion of all input and development of regional collaboration plan by PIP team	Janet Doyel, PIP Lead	Facilitate and document discussion at 12/5/11 PIP Meeting	12/7/11	
Local FSOSs to continue collaboration efforts with court to resolve local issues—via in-person, telephone, or email communication.	Local FSOSs	Issues are identified, addressed, and resolved at local level	Ongoing	
FSOS to continue to seek regional management and/or regional attorney assistance as needed—via phone, email, or monthly FSOS management meetings.	Local FSOSs	Issues are identified, addressed, and resolved at regional management level	Ongoing	
SRA to continue to interact with local judges as needed to address specific issues	Renee Buckingham, SRA	Issues are identified, addressed, and resolved at SRA level	Ongoing	
SRA to continue to involve Central Office in court issues as needed via direct communication with Office of Legal Council leadership or Commissioner's office leadership or through the SRA meeting	Renee Buckingham, SRA	Issues are identified, addressed, and resolved at Central Office level	Ongoing	
Communication of issues/resolutions to the courts will be directly from the level or resolution—FSOS, regional management or regional attorney, SRA, or Central Office	Specific level of resolution	Issues/resolution are communicated with appropriate courts/judges	Ongoing	
Issues/resolutions are communicated to staff via monthly staff meetings and/or email communication	FSOSs/ Associates	Communication of issues/resolution is documented in staff meeting minutes and/or email communication	Ongoing	
PIP team to monitor progress of collaboration efforts as well as identify any necessary follow up via monthly discussion at PIP team meetings	Janet Doyel, PIP Lead	Documentation of resolution in monthly PIP Meeting summaries.	Ongoing starting January 2012	

Action Step 3B.1.2 part 7
KY 7th QR PIP report
December 31, 2011

Doyel 12/7/11

Action Step 3B.1.2 part 7
KY 7th QR PIP report
December 31, 2011

REGIONAL COURT COLLABORATION PLAN
CUMBERLAND REGION
NOVEMBER, 2011

How do you currently resolve issues with the court on the local level?

The local FSOS either attends court hearings or requests meetings with court personnel in order to resolve issues.

How does the local office involve the Regional management in court issues?

If issues cannot be resolved locally through meetings/discussions with the local courts, the local FSOS or SSW notifies the SRAA and/or SRCA about any court issues either via email with order(s) attached or by phone.

How does Regional management involve Central Office in court issues?

If court issues cannot be resolved through the local office or through regional consultation with, and/or action taken by, a regional attorney, then the SRAA or SRCA informs the SRA that consultation with Central Office is needed and requested.

How are issues/resolutions communicated to the courts?

Through meetings/discussions with court personnel held with either the local FSOS and staff or with local, Regional, and Central Office staff.

How are issues/resolutions communicated to staff?

Individually, and through Regional FSOS staff meetings and local office staff meetings.

How does the SRA interact and communicate with courts?

Attends regional and statewide judicial summit/collaboration meetings, meets with Judges when needed/available and agreeable with the Judge.

What works well with the courts in your region?

FSOS/SSWs ensuring that court reports are filed with the Circuit Clerk at least 72 hours before hearings are held, SSWs properly dressed and keeping a professional demeanor when appearing in court, SSWs going on record in court advocating for parents' rights to visitation with children, and workers going on record in court to disagree with a court order/decision that is unnecessarily detrimental to the permanency for a child, parents' rights, or child's needs.

What areas need to be improved or are currently being worked on to improve?

Ensuring that supervisors and workers notify regional management immediately/ASAP if a court order needs to be challenged. Also, workers going on record in court to disagree with a court order/decision that is unnecessarily detrimental to the permanency for a child, parents' rights, or child's needs (this is getting better, but still needs improvement).

11/2011

Regional Court Collaboration Plans

Two Rivers Service Region

In review with the Two Rivers Service Region management team and in collaboration with the two OLS attorneys the following attempts to outline the various types of interaction with the judicial system at all levels within the service region.

Communication and Issue Resolution

Overwhelmingly, legal issues and the communication between the various parts of the judicial system, to include the County Attorney's office are handled at the local level. Local judges freely communicate with the local supervisory staff if there are issues dealing with staff and their interaction with the Court system. Likewise, these judges freely communicate their pleasure or displeasure to the OLS Attorney that frequent their court. As it pertains to matters of law, the lines of communication are then broaden to include the SRAA over the county and the SRA as needed. Decisions to file motions are made at the regional level with the advice and consent of the SRA and in conjunction with the recommendations of the OLS Attorney. In turn Regional management staff will engage both Divisional Leadership and OLS at the Central office level as needed or in instances of issues that may have a profound impact upon not only operations within the service region but possible state wide ramifications. Decisions made at any level are then communicate back down to local staff depending upon the issue's subject matter which may be unique to a particular county, to judicial district, on the macro level to all employees within the service region. In a similar manner, issues at the local unit and/or the regional level are channeled to the courts via the vehicle that works the best for each given court/jurisdiction. Some courts have liaisons that we communicate with or the communication may include either the County Attorney or the OLS attorney. Depending upon the magnitude of the issue, regional office management may or may not be engaged actively but are always kept abreast and provide input to the various parties that are engaged in these communications. It is felt that local issues are best dealt with at the local level, when and if possible for obvious reason.

Collaboration-Challenges

The above represents the majority of the ways and the means in which communication and issue resolutions are resolved within the Region. However, there are particular jurisdictions in which regional management to include the SRA are actively engaged with the Court system. Examples of these are seen in the Daviess Co. District, with is a Court Improvement Project.

This Project mandates these relationships in a non-hostile and not threatening manner. We have seen that it has opened the lines of communication as both parties seek to do what is best for families and children, knowing that there will be times when we can agree to disagree. Likewise, in the Warren County Family Court Jurisdiction, the SRA and other regional management staff are actively engaged in problem solving with both the Judges as well as the County Attorney's office. Sadly, these discussions tend to be more of a blame game with the Cabinet being the "root of all evil". It is hoped that inroads can be made but this will be a continual work in progress.

As it pertains to the role of the SRA, besides the aforementioned examples, the communication has been minimal at the best. Upon accepting this position, the SRA informed all of the Courts of name and contact information and has shared data sets with the Courts in an attempt to open that door. An offer was made for direct communication if any problems arise in their Courts. To date only five judges have had direct communication with the SRA. It appears the Judges would much rather deal with issues at the local level and then if intervention is needed at the regional level, the communication is directed through the OLS attorney(s) or local level supervision.

Strategies for Additional Engagement

With the exception of the ongoing drama in the Warren County jurisdiction, the Region's ability to deal with issues pertaining to the Court system has been successful using the local level approach. We are however attempting new strategies as it pertains to engaging staff in their court conduct, dress, and demeanor. Likewise, we are hoping to use the lessons learned from the Daviess County Court Improvement Project with other courts and see the recent IDTAs as one vehicle to open the communications between regional management and sitting judges.

Northeastern Service Region
Regional Court Collaboration Plan

The NSR has worked to establish relationships with the Courts throughout our region and strengthen our communication. This ongoing work has resulted in positive relationships with most of our Judges and Court personnel. Our success with working with Court personnel is related to ensuring that front line supervisors and SSW's are informed of the agency's policies as they relate to the Courts as well as relative laws/regulations. Strengthening and providing our local office staff with the information they need to work effectively with the Courts is key to successful relationships.

- FSOS will attend court on a regular basis to support both staff and strength relationships with the Court.
- FSOS/SSW will notify Regional Office of any issues/concerns with regards to the court.
- Regional Office will discuss issues with local office staff to develop a plan on how to proceed with Court Issues. Depending on the issues, one of the below steps will be taken to resolve:
 - FSOS/SSW may contact the appropriate court personnel to resolve the issue.
 - For significant issues, Regional Office may assist the local office in resolving issues/concerns.
 - Issues that cannot be resolved at the local/regional level and/or involve systemic issues, Regional Office will contact Central Office and/or OLS for assistance.
- FSOS/SSW will be involved in the development of the plan to address issues with the Court.
- When appropriate, Regional Office will involve local staff to meet with the Courts. Local staff is an integral part of ensuring good relationships/communication with the court.
- NSR recognizes that consistent communication is our most significant barrier to working more effectively with Court Personnel
- Regional Office will continue to work with CO to hold Regional Forums with Courts and CMHC to discuss issues/resolutions
 - Regional Forums will hopefully serve as a vehicle for ongoing communication and/or regular meetings between the Courts and DCBS.
 - Outcomes of these forums/meetings will be communicated to staff via immediate feedback of prevalent issues and discussed at monthly staff meetings.
- How to communicate information to the Court is always discussed as part of the plan developed with Regional Office and staff. Depending on the issue, information is communicated to the Court by:
 - Informal – phone, face to face, e-mail
 - Formal - written in form of a letter or court report
- SRA continues to work with key Court Personnel and Judges to improve communication by:
 - SRA makes themselves available to the Court as needed
 - SRA responds timely and personally to request made by the Court
 - SRA participates in local meetings/projects that are supported by Court Personnel and Judges that are in line with the goals of the agency